

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 11PM ON MONDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 2009

Please note that winners will not be notified until the awards ceremony, therefore please do not contact any of the winners until after the embargo.

Lancashire chef honoured at regional tourism ‘Oscars’

Accrington-born chef Nigel Haworth was honoured last night (**Monday 28th September**) at the sixth annual **England’s Northwest Tourism Awards**. Co-Director of Northcote and one of the region’s greatest food ambassadors, Nigel was presented with the Outstanding Contribution to Tourism Award at **Blackpool’s famous Tower Ballroom**.

Nigel was one of four award winners from Lancashire and Blackpool to be named the best in the Northwest at the ceremony.

The Ashton in Lancaster took home the Bed and Breakfast of the Year award, for its impeccable standards and fantastic elegance. **Blackpool Illuminations** was named the Tourism Event of the Year for its ultra-modern approach to what is a Northwest institution. Tourism Experience of the Year was awarded to **Farmageddon** near Ormskirk, a frightening but unique example of farm diversification at its best, and one of the world’s top 25 must-visit hauntings.

La Locanda Ristorante in Gisburn received a judges’ commendation in the Taste of England’s Northwest category.

Organised by the **Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA)**, the prestigious event aims to drive up the quality of the visitor experience across the region by rewarding excellence in the tourism industry. This year’s event was hosted by BBC North West Tonight presenter **Ranvir Singh**.

In addition to receiving a prestigious title and trophy, regional winners now have the opportunity to represent the Northwest in the national awards, organised by VisitEngland in April 2010.

Felicity Goodey, Chair of Tourism England’s Northwest said:

“The Northwest Tourism Awards have set a very high benchmark for the industry over the past few years. These winners are some of the best of the best. They are delivering a distinctive product, outstanding quality and value for money, that’s why even in the present economic climate they continue to do so well.

PRESS RELEASE



“These awards recognise and reward the leaders in what is a very competitive industry. I am confident we will do very well when some of them represent us in the national Enjoy England Awards for Excellence next year.”

Nick Brooks-Sykes, Director of Tourism at the NWDA, added:

“Tourism is an important industry in the Northwest, contributing over £13 billion to our economy every year. The NWDA is committed to helping the industry to improve its competitiveness, and these awards play an important role in encouraging the quality and standards that we need to be an international player. These businesses are setting the standards for others to follow.”